

# PEOPLE & THINGS

By ATTICUS

THE largest piece of mud I have ever seen hurled at the memory of a dead statesman has just been flung in the United States by the serialisation and publication in book form of "The Final Secret of Pearl Harbour" by Rear-Admiral R. A. Theobald, U.S.N. (Ret.).

The thesis of this remarkably irresponsible book is that President Roosevelt deliberately coaxed Japan into the Pacific war in order to bring the United States into the European war on the side of Great Britain.

Admiral Theobald also maintains that the highest civil and military officials in Washington were involved in the plot and that the American Naval and Military Commanders in Hawaii and their forces were offered as a human sacrifice in order to arouse the American people.

## "Magic"

ADMIRAL THEOBALD'S risible indictment rests on one flimsy argument.

The Americans had broken the Japanese diplomatic cipher and the approximate date of Japan's entry into the war was known to them. Copies of the deciphered Japanese signals, known by the cover name of "Magic," were distributed to only half a dozen recipients in Washington, and "Magic" was not communicated to the Pacific Commands for fear that, if the Japanese were in their turn cracking American codes, they would immediately change their diplomatic cipher and destroy a vital source of American intelligence.

But the Pacific Commands received operational signals based on this American intelligence which, if meticulously obeyed, would have largely invalidated the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbour.

## A Vital Signal

THUS on November 27, 1941, the Navy Department signalled: "This despatch is to be considered a war warning. . . . An aggressive move by Japan is expected within the next few days. . . . Execute an appropriate defensive deployment, etc."

Admiral Kimmel's reaction to this order to deploy was to concentrate his fleet in Pearl Harbour, where most of it was sent to the bottom.

Now Admiral Theobald maintains that President Roosevelt deliberately withheld "Magic" from the Pacific Commands so as to facilitate the Japanese attack.

The book torn to shreds by expert reviewers, is selling like hot cakes.



## The Great Diamond

IN fiction, diamonds are generally described as being as large as pigeons' eggs or walnuts, and the Cullinan was equated with an apple, and I think it was unimaginative of De Beers, who own most of the Premier mine where this great diamond was found the other day, to have set their treasure against a matchbox.

But I suppose De Beers think of diamonds simply in terms of carbon burned into the form of crystals in which each atom is tetrahedrally linked to four others at distances of 1.54 Angstrom units, with a hardness of ten on Mohs's scale and a specific heat of 0.147, and that these crystals (perish the thought) burn at around 1,000 degrees Centigrade and produce carbon dioxide gas.

## Four Koh-i-noors

THE London diamond market, into which this huge and so far nameless stone will shortly drop for onward passage through the brokers and diamond-cutters to the bosom of some beautiful (I hope) wife of a millionaire, as yet knows nothing except that it weighs 426 carats (about 3.4 ounces), that its colour is a "good blue-white" and that its preliminary valuation is around £100,000, which suggests that it is flawless.

By the time it has been sliced, cloven, polished and "sweetened" it will have lost up to fifty per cent. of its weight, but in the form shown here it is the fifth largest diamond ever found, not counting the Koh-i-noor whose original weight has never been established but which, after repeated bad cutting through six centuries, is now a meagre 108 carats in the Royal Crown.

## The Blueprint Stage

IT is some time since we have heard anything of the "Atiantropa" scheme invented in 1928 by Herr Herman Soergel, a Bavarian engineer and I wonder in which Government's In-Tray it now lies buried.

The plan was to dam the Straits of Gibraltar and the Dardanelles and put locks across the Suez Canal. Deprived of the in-flow from the Atlantic and despite rainfall and the in-flow from rivers, evaporation would bring the level of the Mediterranean down by thirty-three feet every ten years.

After a hundred years the level would have fallen 330 feet and a total of 90,000 square miles would have been added to the Mediterranean countries. After another hundred years, according to Herr

Soergel, 220,000 square miles of new land would have been recovered and hydro-electric plants at the three outlets would be providing power for the whole of Europe and Africa.

## Action This Day

A MAN with glittering eyes whom I met during the war had a still more ambitious scheme. He told me that the main island of Japan is supported on a thin stalk, like a mushroom, and he proposed to blast through the stalk and let Japan sail away.

When I asked where she would sail to he became very excited and said he would tow her round the Horn and up through the South Atlantic and stuff her into the Gulf of Mexico. That, he said, would have an interesting effect on the Gulf Stream and the Trade Winds.

I suppose these noble and farsighted projects have somehow got lost in the bureaucratic machine.

## Eclectic Architect

IN recently attributing the design of Atheneum Court to Mr. Wells Coates, I involuntarily slighted one of the most original of English architects, and committed an error which Mr. Coates was the first to correct.

Atheneum Court was, in fact, built in 1934 by Mr. George Adie, who was then only thirty-three years of age. Mr. Adie is an original in life, as well as in architecture; and at the age when most architects are coming to terms with the drawing-board he had made, and discarded, at least one other career.

Now that he has finally settled for architecture, there is no dull specialisation in his practice. A communal centre at Woolwich, a millionaire's mansion at Ascot, an L.P.T.B. garage at Stockwell, and a big new factory at Orpway—all fit acceptably into a scheme of work which, though based on a reasoned pessimism ("We can't expect great architecture; we're not living a great enough life"), has in it the elements of imagination, great practical sense, and intelligent fancy.

## A Correction

IN the Governor's message published in yesterday's issue please read the tenth line from the end "head high and heart afame" instead of "head high and hair afame."—St. Kitts-Nevis (Leeward Islands) "Daily Bulletin," recorded by "The New Yorker."